

## Part II.—Reviews.

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*Nervous and Mental Diseases.* By CHARLES S. POTTS, M.D. London: Henry Kimpton, 1901. 437 pp., with an index and eighty-eight engravings.

THIS text-book, which is one of Kimpton's Series of Modern Text-books, edited by Bern. B. Gallaudet, M.D., is an introduction to the study of nervous and mental diseases, and is intended for students and practitioners. It is divided into two parts. The first, treating of nervous diseases, is contained in 393 pages of printed matter. The second, dealing with mental diseases, is contained in 42 pages.

After perusal of the contents of the book the strongest impression left is that it would have been infinitely better if the author had omitted entirely the section on mental disease in its present form. In his preface he laments the ignorance and neglect of the general practitioner as regards this department of medicine, and then he professes the hope that an "intelligent idea" of a most intricate and difficult class of diseases may be derived—from forty-two pages of sketchy description. Apart from the brevity of the section, however, there are unfortunately many other faults. It is true that the pathology of mental disease is still to a great extent unsettled, but many advances have been made of recent years, and thanks to the new methods of staining and preparing nerve tissues the pathology of the brain is not the closed book it was. But the author, except for one page on the naked-eye and microscopical changes in general paralysis, ignores all pathology in this section. The description referred to, taken from Bevan Lewis (*Ment. Dis.*, 2nd ed.), is delightfully simple. There is no doubt expressed. The whole progress of the disease is set forth once and for all under three headings, and the reader is left with the impression that the last word on that subject, at least, has been said. Under macroscopic changes the usual statement regarding the adhesion of the soft membranes to the convolutions finds a place. How long is this pathological myth to be perpetuated unmodified in our text-books?

The classification of insanity adopted by the author is that of H. C. Wood, and is largely based on ætiology. It is as good, perhaps, as any other provisional classification in the present absence of certain pathological data. It would be a pity, however, if those for whom the book is intended were to believe that "terminal" or secondary dementia was a merely functional mental disorder.

Paranoiacs, according to the author, rather often develop into general paralytics. Is this so? Are they suffering from true paranoia, or are they cases where the physical signs of parietic dementia have lagged behind the mental symptoms, only to declare themselves indubitably at last? And meanwhile, until such physical signs do develop, are they to be regarded as true paranoiacs?

The principle underlying this statement runs through the entire section. No note is taken of the pathological changes which must

underlie the physical signs and symptoms. The author seems to gather together a group of symptoms, usually correlated, convert the group into a clinical entity, and give it a name. Thus mania is one particular set of symptoms, melancholia another. How these arise apparently does not matter.

In the description of the physical signs of general paralysis no mention is made of the different modes of onset; in fact, owing to the extreme compression of the description, the reader is left with the impression that general paralysis is, as a rule, secondary to *tabes dorsalis*. There can be no excuse for writing of delirium tremens and *mania a potu* as one and the same thing; and surely some chronic alcoholics drift into dementia without passing through the stage of terrified depression with delusions and hallucinations described under chronic alcoholic insanity.

The description of puerperal insanity is compressed into a page. But this is not all. The term "puerperal insanity" is made to embrace the insanities associated with pregnancy and lactation.

If there was so great a pressure on space, the chapter on hysterical insanity might well have been omitted; and it will not be generally granted that masturbation has *no* causal relationship to the "insanity of pubescence."

The paragraphs on treatment, though brief, are on the whole more trustworthy; but are all maniacal private patients, when treated at home, to be "dressed in a combination suit of canvas, laced up the back," and kept in a room devoid of furniture except for a mattress? It is not by such confused compilations of symptoms and causes that a clear idea of the various forms of mental disease will ever be given. Without a morbid anatomy, and with no description of clinical cases to act as pegs on which to fix each group of symptoms, they must soon be confused or forgotten, and unless they have been set forth with absolute accuracy, the sooner they are the better.

The first section, dealing with neurology, is of quite a different standard of accuracy. Although here also everything is given succinctly, there is no lack of clearness. It opens with thirty pages descriptive of the anatomy of the central nervous system. Leaving out all "relational" anatomy and beginning with the description of a neuron, the author, aided by excellently planned diagrams, makes clear to the reader the tracks along which motor and sensory impulses travel, the position and purpose of the grey ganglionic masses, and the interconnection of the various parts. It is just what is wanted and no more, and the reader starts out with a clear picture of the structure and the working arrangement of the brain and cord. The mode of production of nervous symptoms, and the effects of destructive lesions in various situations, are next dealt with, and there is a good chapter on electro- and hydro-therapeutics.

As to the main part of this section, without aiming at originality of treatment and without undue theorising, it places before the reader a concise and thoroughly practical description of nervous disease. The classification of the groups of diseases is to a great extent based on anatomical considerations, and here the pathological changes are sufficiently described under each disease. The inequality of the two

sections is so marked that they might have been the work of different authors.

There is a good index. The engravings are clearly reproduced, and the letterpress is excellent; but the weight of the volume is excessive.

KEITH CAMPBELL.

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*Trattato di Psichiatria* [*Text-book of Psychiatry*]. Del Prof. BIANCHI LEONARDO. Napoli: 1901. *Puntata I.* Octavo, pp. 170. Price l. 4.

This is the first instalment of a text-book of psychiatry that is being written by Prof. Bianchi, of Naples. It consists of an introduction and the first two chapters, which contain an anatomical sketch of the cerebral mantle and subcortical white substance, and an account of the physiology of the cerebral cortex. The second part, which is intended to form an introduction to the clinical study of insanity, is to deal with the investigation of the elementary symptoms of mental disorder and their significance. The third part, which will be the longest, is to contain an account of the individual forms of mental disease. The whole work is expected to constitute a volume of about 600 pages. It is being illustrated by numerous figures intercalated in the text. The fifty-four of these contained in this first part are excellently clear, of practical utility, and in most instances original.

In the Introduction, which extends to twenty-two pages, the author chiefly expounds his views upon the subject of the parallel phylogenetic increase of the nervous organs and psychical processes. In his account of the structure of the cortex and cerebral functions he differs in several particulars from the orthodox teaching, on the ground of personal observations. Thus he denies that the anterior part of the frontal lobe, the anterior associative zone of Flechsig, gives rise to fibres of projection, maintaining that it is connected by long association fibres with all the other parts of the cortex, and that it is the organ of the physiological fusion of all the sensory and motor products elaborated in the other cortical provinces. He subjects the views of Flechsig to much adverse criticism, and contends that the "associative centres," with the exception of those of the frontal lobes, are merely evolutional zones, each of which belongs to the perceptive field of one of the special senses.

There can be little doubt that this first instalment of Prof. Bianchi's book amply fulfils the expectations that have been formed regarding it in view of the valuable nature of the contributions already made to neurological science by the author, and the high position he occupies among Continental alienists. The work bids fair to be one of very considerable importance in psychiatric literature. It follows no conventional lines, but, throughout this first part at least, is stamped by originality and even boldness of conception. It is exactly the kind of work which, even though many of the opinions expressed in it will certainly not find immediate acceptance with the majority of readers, serves to place familiar problems in a new and suggestive light, and so tends strongly to stimulate progress in the department of practical science with which it deals. A perusal of this first instalment leaves